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ABSTRACT

This document presents a national vision for girls' education in Ghana and a strategic framework for achieving that vision. The vision statement is: "All Ghana's girl-children and their brothers are healthy, attend safe, welcoming schools, are well-taught by qualified teachers who understand their needs, achieve according to their potential, graduate and become productive and contributing members of our nurturing society." The document examines the persistent gender and regional disparities of girls' education in Ghana, stating that overcoming barriers to girls' education will require multiple perspectives and multisectoral partnerships. The government of Ghana is constrained by lack of resources and is searching for innovative, practical strategies that can motivate wider audiences to become involved. The Girls' Education Unit (GEU's) objectives are to increase enrollment, retention, and achievement of girls, particularly in the sciences, technology, and mathematics. Following introductory information, this document is divided into eight sections: (1) "Context of Girls' Education in Ghana"; (2) "Reform Efforts Focusing on Girls' Education in Ghana"; (3) "Toward the Adoption of a National Vision on Girls' Education: National Symposium on Girls' Education"; (4) "National Vision"; (5) "Strategic Framework"; (6) "Roles and Responsibilities of Key Players in Girls' Education"; (7) "Resources"; and (8) "Conclusion." (Contains 24 references.) (BT)

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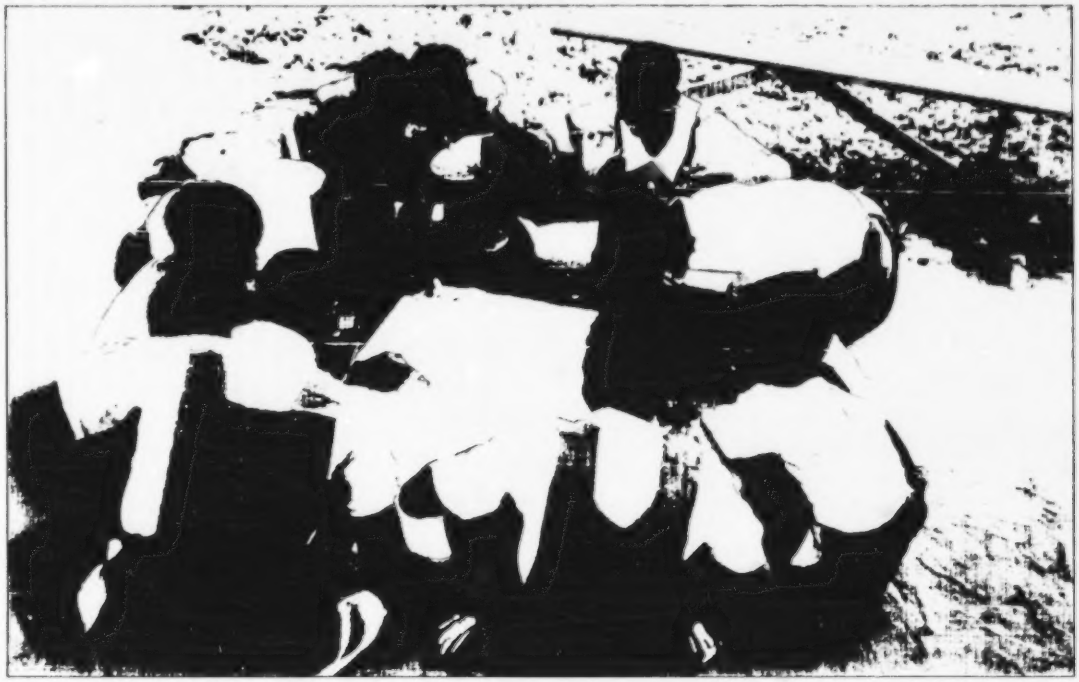
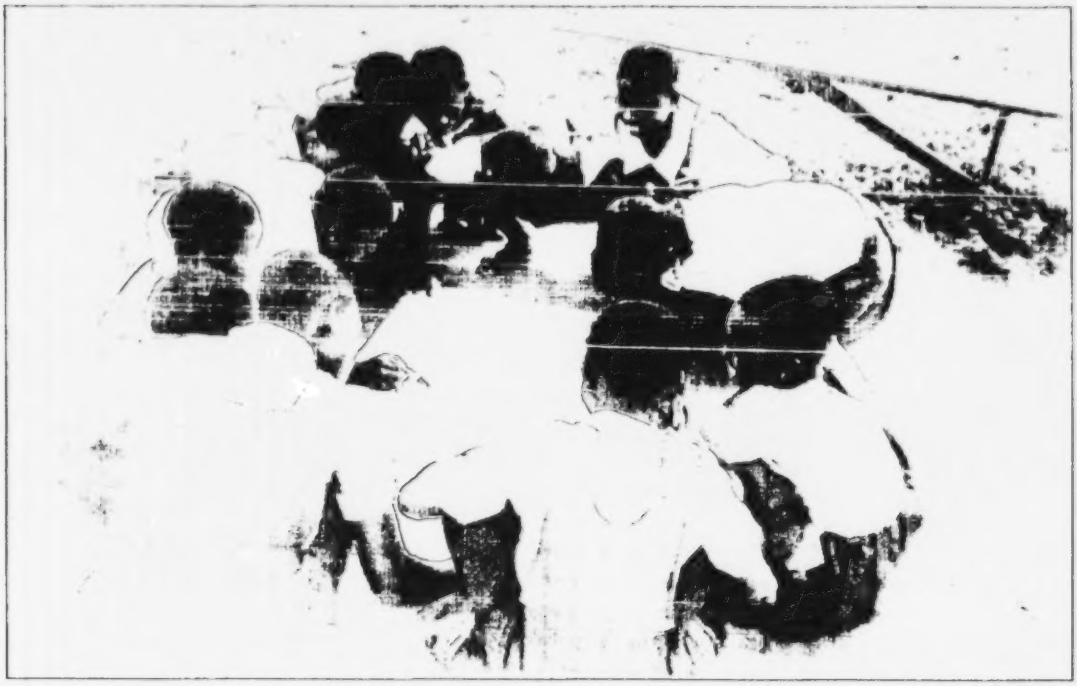
A National Vision for Girls' Education in Ghana and a Framework for Action



Charting the Way Forward

Prepared by the Girls' Education Unit
Basic Education Division
Ghana Education Service

A National Vision for Girls' Education in Ghana and a Framework for Action



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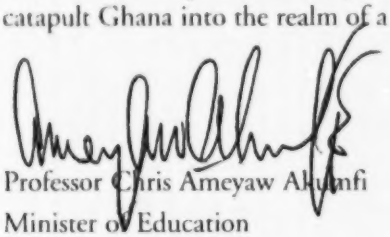
Preface

Ghana's population is very young, with females forming fifty-one percent. How can this vital force be left behind because of various negatives that impact, indeed that militate against their optimum growth and participation in our educational endeavours?

Fortunately, Ghana has been concerned over the years about state of affairs on the girls' education front. This document, *A National Vision for Girls' Education and a Framework for Action: Charting the Way Forward*, provides direction to our endeavours.

This document, despite its title, is gender-friendly. As is often stated, "a girl-friendly school is a child-friendly school". It is my fervent hope that we will use this document to direct the development of this priceless part of our human capital to the optimum to catapult Ghana into the realm of a middle income country.



Professor Chris Ameyaw Akumfi
Minister of Education

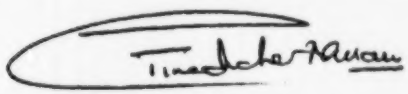
Foreword

Past governments have been concerned about the persistent lack of gender equality in the participation and achievement by girls in education. The formulation of the policy of Education For All (EFA) in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990, and the Educational Reforms in Ghana in 1987, the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) in 1997, made this concern more pressing. In June 1995, a National Seminar on Girls' Education was held in Accra because it was realised that a special emphasis and a coherent plan of action were needed if girls were to gain access to school, participate fully, and come out as achievers. That national seminar resulted in the document, *A National Plan of Action on Girls' Education*, a ten-year plan from 1995 to 2005 by the Ministry of Education.

Since 1995, some success has been gained, but a lot more still needs to be done, hence a fresh look at girls' education. In June 2001, a symposium, "Approaches for Advancing Girls' Education: A Symposium to Examine Current Practices and Identify Future Directions," was organised at Ajumako. This resulted in a strategic document entitled *A National Vision for Girls' Education in Ghana, A Framework for Action: Charting the Way Forward.*

In this document would be found a clearly defined vision and strategies for achieving that vision for girls' education in Ghana. My Government, which has already shown its full commitment by appointing a Minister of State for Primary, Secondary, and Girl-Child Education and a Minister of State for Women and Children's Affairs, fully endorses this document and the strategies outlined.

These strategies should assist us to realise our vision of equal opportunity and achievement for girls and boys, women and men, in whatever sphere they find themselves, beginning with the right kind of education which creates the human capital that is crucial for our national development.



Hon. Christine Churcher

Minister for Primary, Secondary, and Girl-Child Education

Acknowledgements

The idea of a National Vision for Girls' Education started with the National Plan of Action on Girls' Education in December 1995 before the establishment of the Girls' Education Unit in February 1997 through workshops, seminars and research by various individuals and institutions. Other efforts to promote a National Vision have been closely linked to the overall objectives of the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) Programme, which seeks to bring about equity in the education of boys and girls through access, participation, retention and achievement. In fact, the National Vision builds on many previous activities.

The head of the UNICEF's Education Section suggested that institutions and organisations involved in girls' education should be brought together to share ideas and experiences and to chart the way forward. This suggestion resulted in the symposium "Approaches for Advancing Girls' Education: A Symposium to Examine Current Practices and Identify Future Directions," at Ghana Education Service Development Institute, Ajumako, in June 2001. The variety of efforts over the years and the Symposium culminated in this document, which aims to give direction to girls' education activities undertaken by individuals, institutions, organisations, communities, and development partners.

Many people, including Symposium participants, contributed ideas and their time to the development of this document. Special thanks are due to the Hon. Christine Churcher, Minister of State for Primary, Secondary and Girl-Child Education, for her substantive input and enthusiastic support. The Girls' Education Unit's deep appreciation goes to Dr. Lynn Evans of USAID's Strategies for Advancing Girls' Education (SAGE) Project, who put together all the ideas and issues emanating from the Symposium and Working Group meetings, and to Ms. Cecilia R. Pomary, the former Head of Girls' Education Unit.

Sincere thanks go to the following people who formed the Working Group:

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CRDD	Curriculum Research and Development Division
CRT	Criterion Referenced Test
DGEO	District Girls' Education Officer
DfID	Department for International Development
DSTMEO	District Science Technology and Mathematics Education Officer
EFA	Education For All
EU	European Union
FAWE	Forum for African Women Educationalists
FCUBE	Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education
FIDA	Federation of Female Lawyers
G&C	Guidance and Counselling
GES	Ghana Education Service
GEU	Girls' Education Unit
GNAT	Ghana National Association of Teachers
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Technische Zusammenarbeit
IEC	Information Education Communication
JICA	Japan International Co-operation Agency
JSS	Junior Secondary School
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOFA	Ministry of Food and Agriculture
MEST	Ministry of Environment Science and Technology
NGO	Nongovernmental Organisation
P	Primary
PBM&E	Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring and Evaluation
PME	Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Project
PMT	Performance Monitoring Test
PRA/PLA	Participatory Rapid Assessment/Participatory Learning and Action
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
R/DGEO	Regional and District Girls' Education Officers
RGEO	Regional Girls' Education Officer
RSTMEC	Regional Science Technology and Mathematics Education Co-ordinators
DSTMEO	District Science Technology and Mathematics Officers
SHEP	School Health Education Programme
SMC	School Management Committee
SPS	Satisfactory Performance Standards
SSS	Senior Secondary School

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STME	Science Technology and Mathematics Education
TED	Teacher Education Division
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
WITED	Women in Technical Education

Executive Summary

This document presents a national vision for girls' education in Ghana and a strategic framework for achieving that vision. The vision statement is as follows:

> *All Ghana's girl-children—and their brothers—are healthy, attend safe, welcoming schools, are well-taught by qualified teachers who understand their needs, achieve according to their potential, graduate and become productive and contributing members of our nurturing society.*

The document examines the persistent gender and regional disparities of girls' education in Ghana. While girls' enrolments at the basic level have increased, retention, completion, and quality remain problematic.

Barriers to girls' education are multifaceted and interrelated. Moreover, many of these barriers are outside of government's control. However, government can influence other partners to effect change. Indeed, overcoming barriers to girls' education will require multiple perspectives and multisectoral partnerships.

The ability of the Ministry of Education (MOE) to provide access for all children under the Free, Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) Programme, is constrained by lack of resources. The MOE, Ghana Education Service, and in particular the Girls' Education Unit, are looking for innovative, practical strategies that can motivate wider audiences to become involved. Many of these strategies require more and better collaboration with other divisions of the Ghana Education Service (GES) such as Teacher Education, Curriculum Research and Development, the Inspectorate, and the Guidance and Counselling Unit. Other sectors, such as the Ministry of Health, the private sector and the media, religious bodies and traditional leaders, and a host of development partners and nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) currently working in Ghana in basic and girls' education are also involved. These partnerships have the potential to provide more resources—human and financial—for girls' education. However, motivating and sustaining these various groups will be key.

The Government of Ghana has demonstrated its commitment to girls' education by creating in 1997 a special unit within the Basic Education Division devoted to girls' education, and most recently, by creating a high-level post, that of Minister of Primary, Secondary and Girl-Child Education.

The Girls' Education Unit's (GEU's) objectives are to increase enrolment, retention, and achievement of girls, particularly in the sciences, technology, and mathematics. Under the FCUBE Programme, the GEU aims to meet the following targets by 2005 with 1997 as the base year:

- Increase national enrolment of girls in primary schools to equal that of boys and develop and maintain strategies aimed at ensuring the continuation of girls into junior secondary.
- Reduce the dropout rate for girls in primary school from 30 to 20 percent, and of girls in secondary school from 21 to 15 percent. (A dropout is someone who has left school and *not* returned.)

- Increase the transition rate of girls from junior secondary school to senior secondary school by 10 percent.
- Increase the participation of girls in science, technology and mathematics (STM) subjects by improving the quality of teaching and enhancing the perception of these subjects (GES 1999).

To achieve the above, the GEU is undertaking the following activities:

- Mobilising all stakeholders, including the private sector, to improve the quality of teaching and learning for girls.
- Targeting assistance to all deprived areas in the country.
- Encouraging collaboration and communication among various stakeholders.
- Mainstreaming gender sensitivity throughout the programmes, particularly those of the GES.

The Girls' Education Unit, at its latest national symposium on girls' education, led discussions among development partners, NGOs, and community-based organisations (CBOs) on promising approaches in their work in girls' education. Participants shared strategies and suggested good practices that could be replicated in other settings. Included in these good practices were strategies to make education relevant to girls' lives, increase the number of female teachers in rural areas, use role models and mobilise parents and communities in support of girls' education.

Following the symposium, the Working Group on Girls' Education met to refine the national vision for girls' education and to develop a framework of strategies for addressing the three goals of FCUBE:

- Increasing access, participation, retention, and achievement in basic schools and beyond for girls.
- Improving the quality of teaching and learning for girls.
- Improving management efficiency of the GEU.

The resulting strategic framework provides a number of options for promoting girls' education in a variety of settings. Choices, of course, depend on local discussions of needs and decisions about how to go about change. The strategies emphasise linkages between groups to maximise resources and programme effectiveness.

Each key player in girls' education in Ghana—the MOE, other ministries; GES (including the GEU), other MOE and GES divisions/units, regional and district girls' education officers, parents, teachers, girls themselves, district assemblies, the private sector, the media, religious bodies, traditional leaders, development partners, NGOs, and CBOs—has unique resources, capabilities, and competencies, which provide opportunities to increase girls' access to quality education. Achieving the national vision depends upon the collaboration of all these stakeholders. It is the role of the GEU to co-ordinate the work of stakeholders—that is, to facilitate, network, influence, focus, plan and evaluate, and collect and disseminate data and good practices.

Achieving equity for girls requires resources. As part of the regular financial resource management and budgeting process, the MOE and GES should allocate more funds to the promotion of girls' education. The GEU needs a budget for its activities. Regions and districts must receive sufficient resources to play an active role in promoting girls' education. Collaboration with other sectoral initiatives, such as those sponsored by the

Ministry of Health, can provide more resources to address issues affecting girls, such as HIV/AIDS and teenage pregnancy. Within the education sector, GEU collaboration with divisions within the GES, such as TED, CRDD, and the Inspectorate, can intensify efforts and ensure gender sensitivity. The GEU is already doing this, and there is interest in redoubling their efforts wherever possible.

The private sector, development partners, NGOs, and CBOs are important sources of funds. The potential of mobilising private sector support for girls' education needs to be explored further. Appeals should be made to industries and large and small businesses to implement the strategies outlined in the national vision and strategic framework.

Some development partners are already contributing significant amounts of money to support the FCUBE Programme in general and have an interest in supporting girls' education as a priority. Some provide support to the GEU. Additional funds should be leveraged to support girls' education programmes that contribute to the achievement of girls. A well-focused and well-budgeted action plan should be developed to ensure that resources leveraged are applied systematically.

Next Steps

The following actions are recommended as next steps by the GEU in achieving the goals for girls' education.

- Develop and update an annual work plan to address priority activities.
- Develop a matrix of goals and strategies by organisations and locations.
- Develop a database of district projects compiled by DGEOs and the work by organisations included in the matrix.
- Develop a database of role models with contact information.
- Explore ways to mobilise private sector support for education.
- Prepare budget proposals within the framework of the action programme to leverage funds.
- Continue with the sensitisation programme for officers of the MOE and GES to ensure that gender issues are mainstreamed.
- The MOE and the GES to consider the most appropriate location of the GEU in order to promote equity for girls at all levels—basic, secondary, and tertiary—and the creation of a separate budget so that the GEU has the resources to do its work.

All Ghana's girl-children—and their brothers—are healthy, attend safe, welcoming schools, are well-taught by qualified teachers who understand their needs, achieve according to their potential, graduate and become productive and contributing members of our nurturing society.

—National Vision Statement

Strategies and actions that will lead us to our goals will differ from context to context and country to country. The most important thing for us all is to make the first positive and concrete steps from policy to strategy formulation and most importantly to action; from dreams to reality and to fruition, and the way forward will be clearer once we make the move to translate policies to actions, however small the beginnings.

—Hon. Vida Yeboah

1. Context of Girls' Education in Ghana

Purpose

This document re-examines the vision for girls' education in Ghana and provides a strategic framework so that the efforts of all stakeholders can be co-ordinated and organised into a productive, cohesive, and comprehensive push for girls' education in Ghana. It reflects the mosaic of complementary programs and actions by Government, the private sector, development partners, nongovernmental organisations (NGOs), community based organisations (CBOs), religious and traditional leaders, communities, and individuals committed to the education of all children. These strategies are expected to encourage flexibility to experiment with innovative approaches to issues and also provide a structure for co-ordination of efforts. The review considered the accomplishments to date of the Girls' Education Unit (GEU) as well as the experiences of development partners, NGOs, and CBOs to provide a direction for girls' education that builds on practical strategies.

Efforts at providing education for all since 1951 have not yielded the desired results in Ghana. The Education Act of 1961 emphasised the education of all children. Successive governments have developed numerous policies to provide basic education for all children. These included expansion of schools and the development of co-educational institutions to provide equitable access to boys and children. The reforms embarked upon in 1986 targeted equitable male/female participation at all levels of education and the abolition of gender-streamed curriculum at basic level. Gender-sensitive teaching and learning materials were also produced and specific programmes for girls in science embarked upon.

In 1990 the World Conference on Education for All (EFA) in Jomtien, Thailand, set targets for education for all children, youths, and adults, which went well beyond providing universal access to education to improving educational quality and distributing educational resources more equitably (UNESCO 1990).

Ghana's 1992 Constitution recognised the issue of equity in education by providing for free, compulsory, universal basic education. While the constitutional right to education exists, and policies aimed at providing it have been successful in increasing overall enrolment, access, equity, quality, and relevance of education are still problems. One of the most persistent issues is the gender gap in educational participation, which favours boys and which becomes more progressively larger from basic education to senior secondary school to tertiary levels. Equity in access to quality education by girls is not only of primary concern in Ghana, as evidenced in the Dakar Framework for Action (World Education Forum 2000). In Dakar, the vision of the World Declaration on Education For All in Jomtien, 1990, was re-affirmed:

> *...that all children, young people and adults have the human right to benefit from an education that will meet their basic learning needs in the best and fullest sense of the term, an education that includes learning how to know, to do, to live together and to be. It is an education geared to tapping each individual's talents and potential and developing learners' personalities, so that they can improve their lives and transform their societies.*
>
> *—World Education Forum, Dakar, Senegal, 2000*

Enrolment

MOE data reveal that in 1999/2000 there were 991,587 girls and 1,123,394 boys (46.9 and 53.1 percent of the total, respectively) in primary schools. These figures

improved slightly from 1997/1998 when there were 927,990 girls and 1,059,819 boys (45.5 and 54.5 percent, respectively). On the face of it these figures might appear quite impressive.

However, when disaggregated by gender and region, the data make it apparent that the gender gap is wide and deep in certain areas. In Greater Accra, girls' enrolment in primary is equal to that of boys: 50 percent in P1–P5 and 49 percent at P6. In contrast, in the Northern Region, girls' enrolment is 44 percent of the total in P1, decreasing to 36 percent by P6. Within regions, there are differences among districts, with pockets of lower girls' enrolments—even in regions with higher overall enrolments.

Achievement

Achievement data for 1999 for boys and girls show low overall achievement, with mean performance of a national sample of P6 pupils of 36.4 percent in English and 31.2 percent in mathematics on the criterion referenced test (CRT) (Quansah 2000). Mean performance scores have increased gradually from 29.9 percent in English and 27.3 percent in mathematics in 1992. Pass rates on the P6 CRT were 9.1 percent in English and 4 percent in math. This is an increase from 2 percent in English and 1.1 percent in mathematics in 1992. (The pass criterion for English is 60 percent and for mathematics 55 percent.) The CRT is administered to P6 pupils only (PME 2001).

Results from the 1999 CRT showed significantly higher performance for boys in mathematics, but no significant gender differences were found in English (Quansah 2000). Mean performance scores in English ranged from 33.8 percent in Brong Ahafo Region to 43.8 percent in Greater Accra Region; in mathematics, mean performance scores ranged from 30.3 percent in Brong Ahafo to 34.9 percent in Greater Accra Region.

National mean scores on the Performance Monitoring Test (PMT), administered to a random sample of pupils in grades P1 through P6, also showed low overall achievement. Satisfactory performance standards (SPS) were set at 55 percent for the English test and 50 percent for the mathematics test. The mean score of the total sample of P1 pupils was 20.95 percent in English and 39.56 percent in mathematics. For the total sample of P6 pupils, the corresponding means were 34.18 percent in English and 13.94 percent in mathematics (Konadu 1999).

Females performed slightly better than males on the English test, and males performed slightly better than females on the mathematics test. There were significant disparities, however, in the performance of students from urban and rural schools. Differences in English were even greater as pupils progressed through the grades. For example, 14.65 percent of urban pupils in P1 attained SPS in English compared to 11.28 percent of rural pupils in P1. In P6, the corresponding scores were 45.47 percent for urban pupils and 15.76 percent for rural pupils. In math, overall scores decreased from P1 to P6, but urban/rural differences were still evident; 54.92 percent of urban P1 pupils attained SPS in mathematics compared to 32.53 percent of P1 rural pupils, and 3.42 percent of urban pupils and 1.53 percent of rural pupils attained SPS in P6 (Konadu 1999).

Regional differences were evident. Mean performance scores for P1 ranged from a low of 26.48 percent in Upper West Region to a high of 46.72 percent in Greater Accra Region; mean performance scores for P6 ranged from a low of 10.27 percent in Upper West Region to a high of 17.70 percent in the Western Region (Konadu 1999).

In spite of the low achievement rates, most schools promote pupils wholesale. Data on rates of pupil promotion from 1998/1999 to 1999/2000 are almost identical for boys and girls in P1–P5; in the transition from P5 to P6, however, 89 percent of boys were promoted compared to 86 percent of girls (PME 2001).

Retention

Rates of pupil dropout in P1 to P6 from 1998/99 to 1999/2000 show wide regional differences. Percentages of pupils who drop out are lowest in the Greater Accra Region and highest in the three regions in the north. In Greater Accra Region, the percentage of pupils who dropped out ranged from a low of 2.8 percent of boys and 0.9 percent of girls in the transition from P1 to P2 to a high of 3.8 percent of boys and 4.9 percent of girls in the transition from P5 to P6. In contrast, data from the Northern Region show high dropout rates for the transition from P1 to P2 (approximately 28 percent of boys and girls) with smaller percentages (in the 10 percent range) of students dropping out each year until P5. Percentages of pupils who drop out in the Northern Region during the P5 to P6 transition are 4.4 percent of boys and 6 percent of girls. Data from the Upper East Region and Upper West Regions are similar to those from the Northern Region.

Data indicate that the gender gap persists as pupils' progress from Primary to Junior Secondary Schools. In 1999/2000 the percentages of girls and boys in junior secondary were 44.9 and 55.1 percent. This gap widens at each successive level, with females constituting only 33 percent of the Senior Secondary School population and 25 percent of the tertiary level population. (See Appendix 1 for detailed information.)

Barriers to Girls' Education

A synthesis of 54 research studies on girls' education in Ghana (Boakye 1997) concludes that barriers to girls' education are multifaceted and interrelated. While these barriers also affect boys, they affect girls disproportionately. A common denominator to many of the factors is poverty.

- *Barriers to access* include traditional beliefs and practices and perceptions of the role of girls by families and communities; costs to families, including the opportunity costs of sending girls to school and girls having to travel long distances to school.
- *Barriers to retention* include inadequate number of female teachers and role models, rigid adherence to school times and calendars and child labour requirements, teenage pregnancy, early marriage, and inadequate sanitary facilities (FAWE 2001)
- *Barriers to achievement* include low self-esteem (GEU 2000), gender biases in classroom practices (WUSC 2000), minimal guidance and counselling services, and teasing and sexual harassment (Atakpa 1995).

Barriers to girls' education are multifaceted and interrelated. Moreover, many of these are barriers outside of Government's control. However, Government can influence other partners to effect change. Indeed, overcoming barriers to girls' education will require multiple perspectives and multisectoral partnerships (Williams 2001).

There is growing awareness that education is the right and responsibility of all, and that Government alone cannot provide quality education for all. Stakeholders—communities, parents/guardians, NGOs, CBOs, religious bodies, development partners, the media, the private sector—have roles to play, and success will require a synergy of purpose and action.

2. Reform Efforts Focusing on Girls' Education in Ghana

Importance of Girls' Education

Numerous studies have shown that investing in girls' education is probably the most cost-effective measure a developing country can take to improve its standard of living (Acheampong 1992). Educating girls produces considerable social and welfare benefits, such as lower infant mortality and fertility rates (Bruce 1997). In a study of maternal education and child survival in Ghana, Owusu-Darko (1996) found that the higher the education level of the mother, the greater the survival rate of her children. The mother's level of education has also been found to have a direct influence on economic productivity and the level of her daughters' education (Swainson 1995; World Bank 1989). In the words of a famous Ghanaian,

> *No development strategy is better than one that involves women as central players. It has immediate benefits for nutrition, health, savings, and reinvestment at the family, community, and ultimately, country level. In other words, educating girls is a social development policy that works. It is a long-term investment that yields an exceptionally high return.... We need those with power to change things to come together in an alliance for girls' education: governments, voluntary progressive groups, and above all, local communities, schools, and families.*
>
> *—Kofi Annan*
>
> *UN Secretary General*
>
> *World Education Forum, 2000*

The commitment of the Government of Ghana to make girls' education a priority has been demonstrated by the creation of a new, high-ranking position, the Minister of State for Primary, Secondary and Girl-Child Education.

The Education Reforms of 1987

The education reforms initiated in 1987 raised the issue of gender equity by removing gender streaming in subjects in upper primary and junior secondary school. It also set norms for attaining equal participation of males and females throughout the educational system up to tertiary level.

Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE)

The 1992 Constitution enshrined the right to free, compulsory, universal, basic education. Subsequently, the MOE developed a large-scale, comprehensive reform plan called FCUBE (MOE 1996). The goals of FCUBE relative to basic education include the following:

- Increasing access, participation, and retention in basic schools.
- Improving the quality of teaching and learning.
- Improving management efficiency.

The FCUBE Policy Document states, "The Government is committed to making schooling from Basic Stage 1 through 9 free and compulsory for all school-age children by the year 2005" (MOE 1996). Responsibility for the management and implementation of the FCUBE Programme rests with the MOE as the policymaker and GES as the implementing agency for pre-tertiary education.

In addition to the Government of Ghana, a number of Development Partners have supported the FCUBE Programme. These include the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the Department for International Development (DfID), the European Union (EU), Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ), the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the World Bank, among others.

Creation of the GEU

Between 1987 and 1995, girls were still lagging behind boys, despite the education reform. Thus, the MOE, the World Bank, and UNICEF organised a National Seminar on Girls' Education in June 1995. An outcome of the conference was an agreement that the education of girls in Ghana should be emphasised. This was formalised in the Accra Accord on Girls' Education in Ghana, which was followed by the development of a National Plan for Girls' Education for 1995–2005. Internationally, the Beijing Conference in the same year affirmed the need to empower women through education for national development. In 1997, the GEU was formed as a unit within the Basic Education Division in the GES to give new emphasis to the removal of barriers to girls' education (Atakpa 1995).

The co-ordinating role of the GEU is to facilitate, network, influence, focus, plan and evaluate, and collect and disseminate data and good practices. The GEU has a director and staff and a decentralised network of regional and district personnel in the regions and districts. These include a Regional Girls' Education Officer (RGEO) and a Regional Science Technology and Mathematics Education Organiser (RSTMEO) in each of the 10 regions of Ghana, and a District Girls' Education Officer (DGEO) and a District Science Technology and Mathematics Education (DSTMEO) Officer in each of the 110 districts. Regional and District Women in Technical Education (R/DWITED) staff assist girls in technical schools and link them with women in technical fields. They work in all 10 regions and some districts. In addition, the GEU works with a group of community facilitators who conduct mobilisation and sensitisation activities in communities and provide follow-up with families in support of girls' education.

Mission of the GEU

The mission of the GEU is to promote the education of girls by:

- Bringing parity of access to education and educational opportunities.
- Enabling girls to contribute more effectively to the development of the nation.
- Improving the status of women and girls.
- Developing the social capital of women.[1]
- Finding adequate funding support and mainstreaming gender related issues. (GES/GEU Brief, May 2001)

[1] Social capital embodies education, status, self-confidence, bargaining power, influencing power, decision-making power, access to resources, and experience of the political and economic world.

The Objectives of the GEU

The GEU's objectives are to increase enrolment, retention, and achievement of girls, particularly in the sciences, technology, and mathematics. Under the FCUBE Programme, the GEU aims to meet the following targets by 2005 with 1997 as the base year:

- Increase national enrolment of girls in primary schools to equal that of boys and develop and maintain strategies aimed at ensuring the continuation of girls into junior secondary.
- Reduce the dropout rate for girls in primary from 30 to 20 percent, and of girls in secondary from 21 to 15 percent. (A dropout is someone who has left school and *not* returned.)
- Increase the transition rate of girls from junior to senior secondary school by 10 percent.
- Increase the participation of girls in science, technology and mathematics (STM) subjects by improving the quality of teaching and enhancing the perception of these subjects (GES 1999).

Major Accomplishments of the GEU

Since the beginning of the FCUBE Programme in 1997 and the creation of the GEU in 1997, much has been accomplished. Regional and District Girls' Education Officers (R/DGEOs) and Science, Technology and Mathematics Education (STME) Co-ordinators and Officers throughout the country have been trained on techniques of sensitisation of communities; and STME clinics have been organised annually (Simpi-Amuzu 2001). A newsletter, *Gender Matters*, is produced and disseminated nation-wide to share GEU activities and create awareness of the importance of gender sensitivity. In addition, Development Partners, NGOs and CBOs, some working closely with the GEU, have been actively involved in community mobilisation in support of girls' education, development of a SMC/PTA handbook and training manual, female scholarship programmes, income-generating activities for women, Girls' Education Week celebrations, radio and television programmes, symposia, debates and essay competitions. In the Northern, Upper East and West regions, food is provided to girls in selected schools to increase enrolment and retention (GES 2001). Working with the Curriculum Research and Development Division (CRDD) of the GES, new gender-sensitive syllabi have been written, and textbooks have been revised for gender-sensitivity.

3. Toward the Adoption of a National Vision on Girls' Education: National Symposium on Girls' Education

A National Seminar on Girls' Education was organised by the MOE, UNICEF and the World Bank in June 1995 with the theme, "Improving Access to Quality Education for Girls." This culminated in "A National Plan of Action." In 1996, the implementation of the constitutional requirement for free compulsory and universal basic education led once again to a focus on girls' education. The GEU was established to assess progress and chart the way forward. To do so, the GEU with assistance from UNICEF, organised another symposium on girls' education in 2001, "Approaches for Advancing Girls' Education: A Symposium to Examine Current Practices and Identify Future Directions." The symposium was held at the Ghana Education Service Development Institute (GESDI) at Ajumako. At the meeting, Development Partners, NGOs and CBOs shared a variety of innovative approaches for increasing access and participation by girls, enhancing the quality of teaching and learning and increasing efficiency in management in programs for girls.

While these Development Partners, NGOs and CBOs work in varying contexts within Ghana and implement very different approaches, there was clear consensus about what the problems are and a strong commitment to finding ways to collaborate to solve them. Specifically, the national conference centred on the development of a comprehensive strategy by addressing the following questions:

- What are the most critical issues?
- What strategies can move girls' education toward accomplishing the goals of fCUBE and the objectives set for the GEU?
- How can GES/GEU and stakeholders work more closely to promote girls' education?

Participants identified and examined the most critical issues that affect the participation of girls in education.

Issues Discussed at the Symposium

Increase access, participation and retention in Basic schools, and beyond

- How do we increase national enrolment of girls in primary schools to equal that of boys by the year 2005?
- How do we reduce the dropout rate for girls in Primary and Junior Secondary School and increase the transition rate from Junior to Senior Secondary School by the end of the FCUBE Programme and beyond?

Improve the quality of teaching and learning

- How do we develop and maintain strategies aimed at ensuring girls' academic achievement and continuation into junior secondary?
- How do we incorporate emerging issues like HIV/AIDS, early childhood education, guidance and counselling, health and nutrition into girl-child education?

- How do we increase the participation of girls themselves in the development process? How can a "hunger for education" be generated in them?

Improve efficiency in management of the GEU

- How do we create mechanisms to ensure collaboration among partners? What should be the relationship between the GEU and the Partners and how can this be maintained and strengthened?

Review of Symposium Recommendations and Other Relevant Documents

As a follow up to the national symposium, a Working Group on Girls' Education was convened to review the suggestions that came out of the symposium, review the National Vision and refine it as needed and develop a strategic framework for action. This strategy was to encourage flexibility to experiment with innovative approaches to issues while at the same time defining a structure to co-ordinate efforts—programmatically and geographically—of stakeholders, including the GEU and Regional and District Girls Education Teams.

The National Vision and Strategic Framework are thus products of the National Symposium and the work of the Working Group on Girls' Education. These products are designed to build upon policies and accomplishments to date in the area of girls' education and to provide a direction that builds on *practical* strategies. These products are designed in such a way that Government and stakeholders, large and small, from multinational Development Partners to individuals who seek to make a difference, can undertake the activities outlined to advance girls' education in Ghana.

4. The National Vision

All Ghana's girl-children—and their brothers—are healthy, attend safe, welcoming schools, are well-taught by qualified teachers who understand their needs, achieve according to their potential, graduate and become productive and contributing members of our nurturing society.

This vision is the result of dialogue among a wide variety of stakeholders and the Girls' Education Unit of the Ghana Education Service. It is the culmination of a long history of efforts to reform education in Ghana in general and more recent efforts by the Government of Ghana, the Ministry of Education and the Ghana Education Service to focus attention on girls' education in particular. The vision was articulated to focus the efforts of all stakeholders, since the accomplishment of this vision will depend on its translation into action through practical, realistic strategies.

5. Strategic Framework

The need for partnerships

The Government of Ghana, and in particular the Ministry of Education is committed to achieving the National Vision. The goal of empowering women through girls' education can only be achieved, however, if responsibility is shared by many, including Ministries, Departments, Agencies, the Private Sector, the Media, committed Ghanaians, communities, families, civil society organisations, Religious Bodies, Traditional Leaders, NGOs, CBOs and Development Partners. The strategies involve partnerships between and among the various stakeholders to promote the implementation of girls' education programmes and activities in areas of felt need. In particular, the Private Sector has a key role to play.

Focus of strategies

The strategies are quantitative (targeting access to and participation in education), qualitative (focusing on transforming the learning environment and increasing achievement); they also include improving management efficiency. These together could increase retention and completion. While a variety of strategies are offered, there is a need to identify problems and design solutions locally, adapting the most suitable approaches to fit the circumstances. As with any strategy, advocacy is a key component; parents, community members and girls themselves need to be made aware of *why* educating girls is so important.

Strategies to increase access, participation and retention in basic schools and beyond

Strategies in this category seek to increase access to educational opportunities for girls and promote their retention to completion of basic education and beyond. It is important to demonstrate to parents/guardians and to girls themselves, why education makes a difference and why school is important. Strategies to increase access and participation address parent/guardians and community awareness and participation; school-community relationships; physical facilities; enrolment, attendance and retention; student welfare; health and feeding; and costs. These strategies contribute to the achievement of the National Vision.

1. Use role models

A variety of female role models can encourage girls to enrol and remain in school: queen mothers, female teachers, professional women, university alumni, senior secondary students, and prominent individuals. Role models should be called on to spearhead enrolment drives, sponsor needy girls, organise programs and provide home-stay. Urban, educated women should be encouraged to work in or visit their villages at regular intervals to interact with the girls and community members about the importance of girls' education.

2. Mobilise parents, communities and the private sector in support of girls' education

Participatory Rapid Assessment/Participatory Learning and Action (PRA/PLA) among other techniques should be used to create community awareness of the need to educate

girls. School Management Committee/Parent Teacher Association (SMC/PTA) training should be provided to empower people to plan, implement and monitor their own initiatives. Parents could be sensitised about issues that negatively affect girls' performance such as too much housework. A media campaign should be used to broadcast discussions and other programmes on issues relating to girls' education. Religious Bodies should be enlisted to promote girls' education. Clubs should be formed to create gender awareness. The Private Sector could be approached for support in planning and implementing these local initiatives. As contributions of the Private Sector are crucial in planning and in implementing local initiatives in support of education, it could be the target of a planned programme of action.

3. Address local problems

Barriers to girls' education vary depending on the socio-economic level of the community; solutions therefore should be context-specific. The feasibility of the following strategies should be examined. Flexible scheduling during the school year could accommodate local activities such as marketing, harvests or periods of inaccessibility that prevent girls from attending school; and school timetables could be adjusted to allow for child labour requirements (e.g., farming and work in the home). Flexible payment of school levies to allow parents to pay in instalments or at times when they have money and cost-effective ways of transporting children to and from school could be explored.

4. Support guardians/parents to cater for their children/wards' schooling

Income-generating schemes for women could generate money for school levies and materials. Scholarship schemes for needy girls could be encouraged. There should be close collaboration with experienced partners in this area.

5. Include children as stakeholders

Children need to have a voice in discussions about their needs, and adults need to be sensitised to listen. Tools such as PRA/PLA, the SARA series, *Stepping Stones,* puppetry, drama and study groups can facilitate discussions between adults and children and among the children themselves. Already this is being done in some schools and communities, but it should be intensified and broadened to cover more schools.

6. Address special needs and concerns of girls

Assault, sexual harassment, rape and privacy issues need to be addressed if girls are to feel safe and comfortable in attending schools. Strategies include continued examination of laws affecting girls and advocacy for enforcement; strengthening of guidance and counselling services in schools to give advice on sexual maturation and concerns such as assault, sexual harassment and teenage pregnancy; and provision of sanitary facilities. More gender awareness clubs should be established, and one teacher in each school could be trained as a gender awareness facilitator to support the club. There should also be more programmes for boys and men on gender matters. Provision should be made for girls with special needs so that they can care for themselves and become productive members of society. Links with the Special Education Division, Social Welfare, NGOs, CBOs, communities, parents/guardians and the girls themselves could be helpful in developing and implementing strategies to provide for physically challenged girls.

7. Promote complementary education

Complementary, non-formal programmes for girls who are over-age or who have dropped out of school and returned are needed. These should be module-based teaching-learning packages that allow pupils to progress at their own pace. Pupils should be assessed to determine where to begin in the programme and placed at the appropriate level of difficulty.

8. Improve reproductive health knowledge and behaviours

Involving local communities in the provision of sanitary facilities and in school health programmes that discuss the special reproductive health needs of girls should encourage girls to attend school more regularly and drop out less.

Special campaigns to create awareness of HIV/AIDS and prevent infection through changed behaviours of girls and community members should be intensified. The GEU should collaborate with the School Health Education Unit and Ministry of Health in designing and implementing initiatives related to HIV/AIDS and teenage pregnancy. Working with CRDD, TED, SHEP and the Inspectorate Division, the GEU should ensure that information on HIV/AIDS is integrated into curricula, taught and examined.

9. Provide feeding programmes

School feeding programmes have been used in some areas to encourage access, participation and achievement in education. When feeding programmes are used, advocacy for education should complement them so that parents and the girls themselves learn the value of education and the relationship between nutrition and learning. This would ensure that when food aid stops girls would still go to school, remain and achieve. The GEU should, therefore, prepare a better framework for monitoring activities of NGOs, CBOs and Development Partners in this area and for assessing the long-term effects of the feeding programmes.

10. Bring schools closer to pupils' homes

The policy allowing communities to establish community schools should be vigorously promoted. Communities should be encouraged to build schools with local materials, which would reduce problems caused by girls' need to travel long distances to school. Local people would be employed as teachers, with training and support from Government, NGOs or CBOs. Church buildings and mosques and other appropriate spaces could be used for school classes.

Strategies to improve the quality of teaching and learning

Strategies in this category seek to improve the learning environment by making them more girl-friendly. For example, gender-sensitive curricula; teacher motivation and retention; teaching methodologies that encourage the participation of all students; teacher training in learner-centred methodologies; resources for schools such as furniture, equipment, gender-sensitive textbooks and materials; classroom management; classroom assessment; and pupil achievement in all subjects, especially in the sciences and mathematics.

These strategies are expected to result in improving the quality of education so that, as the National Vision states, girls "…are well-taught by qualified teachers who understand their needs." The strategies will enable girls to learn, remain in school and make the

transition to higher levels so that they—in the words of the National Vision statement—"...achieve according to their potential, graduate and become productive and contributing members of our nurturing society."

1. Making education relevant to the lives of girls

To encourage the love of learning, education must be relevant and responsive to girls' interests and needs. Curricula and textbooks for basic schools in Ghana have been revised to be more gender sensitive.

2. Provide incentives to female teachers to teach in remote areas

Female teachers would be encouraged to teach in rural areas if they were given incentives and support for quality of life concerns (GEU 2000). A package including a radio, solar lantern, barrels for water and water filter; health care provisions, consultations and medicines; and assistance to own a house should be considered. Assistance to teachers by way of transportation and regular in-service training should also be considered. Links with the Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT) should be explored to provide more support for teachers in remote areas. A policy is under consideration that would require new teachers to teach in rural areas for a period with the assurance that they would have the option of moving to a school closer to an urban centre should also be considered. A package should be considered for teachers who teach in rural areas to receive preference for study leave for entering higher levels of education or promotions.

3. Provide teacher sensitisation and training

Teachers should be continuously made aware of gender issues in pre-service and in-service training. They also need to learn more classroom practices that are gender sensitive. Teacher trainees should also receive training on gender awareness and be assessed on the topic. After teaching practice this aspect of their work and lessons learnt should be presented graded as part of their course work. The GEU should confer with CRDD and TED on this.

Teachers need to be supported in implementing the curriculum and in the use of textbooks. They also need to know how to use gender-sensitive teaching methods and materials, respect children's rights and ensure equity in the classroom. Basic training in career guidance and counselling for teachers should be intensified.

Teachers need to be given techniques in multigrade teaching to enable them successfully teach such classes in understaffed schools.

The handbook on gender-sensitive teaching should be used by trained R/DGEOs and Circuit Supervisors to work with teachers. Links with the Inspectorate Division and the Guidance and Counselling Unit should be intensified to enable teachers implement the gender-sensitive behaviours both in and outside the classroom. The GEU should collaborate with TED and teacher training colleges and universities to ensure that the above practices are built into the curriculum during pre-service.

4. Teachers' formal commitment

Some teachers have signed "bonds" with their communities, promising that they will provide their best for their pupils, particularly girls, with the understanding that the communities will support the teachers by ensuring that pupils do all that is expected. The GEU, working through the Regional and District GEOs and their partners at the regional and district level, should study this further. Further information, education and communication activities should be undertaken until communities understand the need for

education and become interested in their children's, particularly girls,' education as a matter of course.

5. Communities making a compact with female teachers

Studies have proved that generally, female teachers, particularly newly trained female teachers who are young and vulnerable, suffer a lot of sexual harassment in the communities where they are posted. Therefore, they need to be protected. The GEU should work with the District Education Oversight Committee and the Social Services Committee of the District Assembly to promulgate by-laws to prevent this. Information, education and communication activities should also be undertaken by the Regional/District GEOs and other partners in the regions and districts to create a supportive environment.

6. Increase the supply of school infrastructure/teaching and learning materials

School buildings, teachers' quarters, furniture, equipment and teaching materials need to be provided in disadvantaged areas. The Private Sector can also play a key role in partnership with local communities by providing materials and equipment, while communities contribute labour.

There are teaching and learning materials in the environment that can be used to develop locally made textbooks and supplementary materials. Teachers should be made aware of the techniques in finding, making and using such materials. Fortunately, Japanese International Co-operation Agency has established such a Centre at Akropong Training College with excellent results. The GEU together with CRDD and GNAT should publicise these results.

7. Continue with science, technology and mathematics education (STME) clinics for girls and workshops for teachers of STME subjects

STME is an ongoing programme in Junior and Senior Secondary Schools to increase girls' participation the fields of science, technology and mathematics. It provides an opportunity for girls to engage in hands-on activities and interact with female role models in STM careers (GEU 2001). This should be continued and reviewed at regular intervals. Teachers who teach science should continue to be trained in innovative science and science-related teaching methods.

8. Provide schools of excellence

To reduce discrepancies between rural and urban districts, the Government is to establish one school per district to be designated as a "school of excellence". These schools will be equipped with qualified teachers and materials and equipment to enhance teaching and learning to enable pupils to achieve their full potential and go on to tertiary institutions. Teacher trainees should do practical training, and experienced teachers should visit and talk with the school-of-excellence teachers for professional development.

9. Provide early childhood care and development (ECCD) programmes

UNESCO and UNICEF have been consistently promoting ECCD as an integral part of basic education and of Education For All (EFA). The Basic Education Division of the GES is responsible for the education of children of age 6–15 or from P1 to JSS3. The FCUBE Programme did not address ECCD. Research shows, however, that a child's learning ability and orientation toward learning are shaped during pre-school years. Standards for ECCD should be enforced so that good pre-school services are provided by families, day-care centres, nurseries and kindergarten for children from birth to 6 years.

Research confirms that children, particularly girls, who attend pre-school develop an early love and interest in learning and school and therefore seldom drop out.

Also, establishing more pre-school centres would enable more girls to go to school since the burden of looking after their siblings could be relieved.

Links between the Ministries of Education (including GEU), Health, Local Government and Social Welfare should enhance the development and implementation of such programmes. The MOE should have a policy for such centres, and GES should continue to train teachers and caregivers. The GEU should work closely with ECCD staff in the field and invite them to training sessions on gender-related matters to make them gender sensitive.

10. Supervise teaching and learning

Supervision by relevant bodies should be intensified as a key activity in improving teaching, learning and achievement outcomes in schools.

Strategies to improve management efficiency for the GEU

1. Building the capacity of the GEU and R/DGET

The capacity of GEU staff at all levels should be developed to enable them to plan and monitor girls' education programmes. Capacity building should be in the areas of felt need like advocacy, maintaining a statistical database, monitoring and evaluation, and networking with the appropriate Ministries, Departments, Agencies, Development Partners, NGOs, CBOs etc.

The Regional and District Girls' Education Teams have identified the following topics as areas for further training: community mobilisation skills (PRA/PLA); guidance and counselling; promotion of science among girls; training for newly-appointed R/DGEOs; project planning and implementation; proposal and report writing; promotion of girl-friendly schools and teaching methodologies; monitoring and evaluation including data collection and use. The necessary expertise could be contracted to carry out the training programme.

2. The co-ordinating role of the GEU

The Ghana Education Service through the GEU should co-ordinate the efforts of all stakeholders so that the interventions of the various groups and individuals complement one another and contribute to the achievement of the FCUBE goals and, ultimately, the National Vision.

To achieve the National Vision, the GEU must assume the role of change facilitator and guide the change process. Strategies in this category seek to improve efficiency in management for the GEU by ensuring capacity is well-developed at all levels, from the central administrative unit to the regional and district offices, to plan, manage, monitor and assess girls' education programs. This is particularly important because of attrition at the district and regional levels since the initial training of the R/DEOs. Strategies in this category also seek to improve management efficiency by building partnerships among the GEU, other GES Divisions and the MOE, and stakeholders; establishing a leadership role for the GEU in managing change; monitoring and assessing girls' education programs; providing opportunities for sharing good practices; replicating and mainstreaming good practices where appropriate; and motivating staff.

3. Create linkages with other MOE/GES Divisions and other Ministries

In the short- to medium-term gender sensitive programming is expected to be mainstreamed in planning and implementation in the MOE and GES.

Links with other MOE/GES and other divisions whose work affect girls' education can multiply the efforts in support of girls' education. CRDD has revised curricula to be more girl-friendly. R/DGEOs should link up with Circuit Supervisors in providing in-service training and follow-up. Links with the Guidance and Counselling Unit should help develop Guidance and Counselling programmes for girls around personal and career issues. Links with Special Education should address the unique challenges of girls with special needs. Links with School Health Education should also ensure that the health needs of girls are met.

While the GEU is a unit of Basic Education, links with the Secondary Education and Teacher Education Divisions are important to advocate for the interests of girls as they progress through school. In addition, links with the Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring and Evaluation Division (PBME) of the MOE and the Planning Unit of GES should provide data for GEU programme monitoring among other things at the regional and district levels. The GEU should undertake a programme of sensitisation to ensure that financial projections and budgeting at national, regional and district level have girls' education as a priority indicator.

Links with other ministries, such as the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, should be pursued to encourage the promotion of programmes with common goals such as HIV/AIDS and ECCD. Further links should be sought with the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA) and Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology (MEST). In fact, all GES divisions should be mandated to develop a gender component to all their activities.

4. Create mechanisms for collaboration among the GEU and NGOs, CBOs, Development Partners and Universities

A matrix showing programmes/projects that are being implemented by NGOs, CBOs and development partners should be developed so that the GEU would map them programmatically and geographically. A database of projects based on the matrix should also be established. R/DGEOs, with their knowledge of their regions and districts, are in an excellent position to describe the various organisations, large and small, that are working there.

the GEU should develop mechanisms for regular interaction between the GEU and other collaborators. Through events such as the National Symposium on Girls' Education good practices and lessons learned should be shared. Sharing should take place at community, district and regional levels as well. Good practices can be replicated and/or mainstreamed by the GES through the GEU as appropriate to other contexts and as feasible. These sessions could also assist in co-ordination.

5. Develop annual work plans with indicators, monitor and report results

the GEU should continue with their annual work plan with indicators and monitoring tools developed to monitor progress on each objective. The results should be used in planning and decision-making. An annual conference of R/DGEOs and STMEOs would build new skills and provide a forum for sharing of ideas.

6. Address the needs of GEU teams

For R/DGEO and STMEO staff to be facilitators of change efforts, they need training. Due to attrition and to new information, this is a continuing effort. Relevant professional training, such as training based on the "Handbook for Girls' Education", is needed to keep R/DGEOS up to date and to maintain their high levels of motivation.

Provision for transport needs to enable R/DGEOs and STMEOs to do their jobs. Imprest is also needed to facilitate R/DGEO activities. In addition, community facilitators should be provided an allowance for their activities.

6. Roles and Responsibilities of Key Players in Girls' Education

Each of the key players in girls' education in Ghana has unique resources, capabilities and competencies that provide opportunities to increase girls' access to quality education. An important role of the GEU is to understand these potential contributions and form partnerships among stakeholders in the various sectors, according to the needs and vision. As mentioned earlier, the co-ordinating role of the GEU involves facilitating, networking, influencing, advocating, planning and evaluating, and collecting and disseminating data and good practices.

Ministry of Education

The Ministry of Education makes public policy relating to education at all levels. Its sensitivity to gender issues is very vital for the successful implementation of the GEU's mandate.

Ghana Education Service

The GES implements policy at the pre-tertiary level. The GES has 10 regional and 110 district offices of education, and it is responsible for developing and implementing programmes to meet policy requirements regarding girls' education among others. Like the MOE its level of gender sensitivity would affect the work of the GEU. The GEU would need to be very visible here.

Other MOE/GES Divisions

the GEU should interact on a more regular basis with other divisions within the MOE and GES to ensure that curricula, syllabi and textbooks are gender-balanced (CRDD), that teacher training includes gender-sensitive teaching methods (TED), and that guidance and counselling programmes meet the needs of girls (G&C). The GEU must also link up with the Secondary Education Division and Tertiary Education to address issues at these levels.

Other Ministries

Since the barriers to girls' education are multifaceted, solutions require partnerships outside of the MOE, with other Ministries such as the Ministry of Health, and Ministry of Local Government. Collaboration by the GEU with other sector initiatives, such as those sponsored by the Ministry of Health, can provide more resources to address serious health-related issues affecting girls, such as HIV/AIDS and teenage pregnancy. Links with the Ministry of Human Resource and Social Welfare would enhance the development and implementation of early childhood education programmes.

Girls' Education Unit

Presently the GEU is a unit within Basic Education, and its stated objectives relate to girls in primary and junior secondary. The issue of girls' education, however, is much larger. Indeed, the gender gap in enrolment, retention and achievement grows as the level of education increases. The GEU should be responsible for the entire spectrum of girls' education so as to provide a voice for girls' issues not only at the basic, but at the other levels as well.

Co-ordinating the efforts of stakeholders is an important aspect of the GEU's role. Numerous Development Partners, NGOs and CBOs are providing programmes that address girls' needs in various parts of Ghana. Some of these programmes, which operate at the district or community levels, are not well - known. The GEU should assess the activities and spread of organisations working to promote girls' education and determine the areas of greatest need that are not being addressed. For example, while many programmes target certain regions, other areas in the country are equally deprived but receive little assistance.

As part of their co-ordinating role, the GEU with its Regional and District Teams should continue to organise fora at national, regional and district levels where stakeholders share what is and is not working and lessons learned. Participants should include partners from various sectors, district and regional GES office and GEU staff, NGOs, CBOs, Development Partners, school and community representatives—a wide variety of stakeholders in the area of girls' education. Promising practices should be adapted or replicated by others and/or mainstreamed by GES. Through collaboration, practices that work would be selected and brought to scale.

Regional Education Offices/District Education Offices

Decentralisation of resources and their allocation means that girls' education issues must be identified at the regional/district levels and budget and planning must provide for costs associated with addressing these issues. Regional and District Directors of Education should allocate more funds for girl-child education in their budgets. For girls' education to succeed, Regional and District Directors would have to provide more support for the R/DGETs.

Regional Girls' Education Officers/District Girls' Education Officers, Regional Science, Technology and Mathematics Education Co-ordinators/Officers and Women in Science and Technology Regional and District Officers (R/DGETs)

The above-named officers work at the regional and district levels, respectively, in order to increase girls' access to and participation in education. They should be seen as the gender/girl-child resource to all GES officers and work with them to realise set goals. To ensure continued success, all Regional and District Education Office personnel have to accept and integrate gender issues into their professional views.

The Terms of Reference for DGEOs specify the tasks involved: to actively promote girls' education; to act as a link between the GEU and communities; to develop awareness of the issues relating to girls' education within the district education office; to take positive action within the district to raise girls' enrolment and retention rates; and to monitor girls' enrolment, retention and achievement rates.

In executing their duties, R/DGETs perform many information, education and communication tasks and seek ways to solve local problems related to girls' attendance. They are in a unique position to work with Regional Co-ordinating Councils/District Assemblies to promote girls' education and serve as strong liaisons with the GEU.

RGETs also act as a link between the GEU and the Regional Education Offices. They co-ordinate girls' education efforts at the regional level, monitor and evaluate districts in their regions. With the development of simple and straightforward monitoring tools, they would more efficiently collect information to assess the impact of change efforts.

District Assemblies

With decentralisation, there has been a shift to local control of resources and planning to meet local needs. With this shift in resources comes the responsibility to provide equitable access to quality education for girls. District Assemblies should provide funds for girls' education activities in their districts and work closely with the DGEOs in their districts to carry out these plans.

Religious Bodies and Traditional Leaders

Religious and Traditional Leaders play an important role in shaping beliefs and attitudes about girls' education. In fact, it is unlikely that attitudes of communities will change very much without the sanction of these important groups. Religious groups frequently have their own schools and affect large populations. They should be encouraged to set aside a day for sensitisation programmes and discussion of educational issues, especially those that affect girls in their districts and communities.

The Media

An important aspect of all of the above activities is communicating what is being done to a larger audience. The Media, with its credibility as a source of information, can attract public attention and shape public attitudes about educating girls. Already women in media are active in the field of gender sensitisation. This alliance should be intensified so that they become the focal persons on issues that affect girls. Electronic and print media would be used wherever appropriate to propagate the information on gender issues.

Development Partners, NGOs, CBOs etc.

Development Partners, NGOs and CBOs bring resources and a variety of potential solutions to bear on the issues surrounding girls' education. NGO and CBO community networks and their knowledge of local contexts and community mobilisation techniques, are invaluable in bringing about change at the grassroots level.

Development Partners, NGOs and CBOs need to communicate with both the local communities and the GEU in designing interventions. This is important to ensure that planned activities match needs and add value to ongoing activities in the area.

Development Partners, NGOs and CBOs need to communicate regularly with the GEU and the R/DGEOs in the regions and districts where they work regarding their achievements, challenges and lessons learned. Sharing results of such events as the National Symposium on Girls' Education are very helpful in spreading strategies that work: for replication, mainstreaming and maintaining motivation.

Private Sector

The private sector needs educated personnel, and it shares a responsibility for an educated workforce. With its commitment to delivering products, businesses take a "bottom line" approach. Education is little benefit if, after graduating, girls do not have at least the functional literacy and numeracy skills to get jobs.

The Private Sector should assist schools in numerous ways: by building infrastructure (classrooms, libraries, places of convenience etc.) or contributing materials to communities for building projects; by printing supplementary educational materials; by distributing textbooks; and in other ways determined in collaboration with local schools to meet their particular needs. Involving the Private Sector helps to keep an eye on the target.

Conditions for Successful Partnerships

Achievement of the vision relating to girls' education requires the formation of multisectoral partnerships. The formation of successful partnerships across sectors involves understanding the strengths of the various sectoral stakeholders and also depends on the presence of five factors, all of which are present in Ghana.

According to Charles et al. (1998),

- There must be a common issue, which is important to the partners. Educating girls is a compelling issue in Ghana, which is shared across sectors. Moreover, the MOE has demonstrated its commitment to the achievement of the National Vision for girls' education.
- Stakeholders must believe that together they can accomplish something that would not happen otherwise. When Ghanaians believe something is important, they will use all means to achieve it.
- There must be a convening party that can bring key stakeholders together and facilitate cross-sectoral dialogue and partnerships. This is the role of the Minister of State for Primary, Secondary and Girl-Child Education and the GEU of the Ghana Education Service.
- There must be financial and human resources to support the process. This assistance will be provided by the GES, the Private Sector, Development Partners, NGOs, CBOs, etc.
- Finally, the partners must be willing to explore new ways to work together and be creative in finding new solutions to persistent problems.

The National Symposium on Girls' Education is an example of such an effort; links created by the GEU among the key players will enable further brainstorming, trial of new ideas and widespread sharing. Key stakeholders such as the Private Sector must be mobilised, and practical strategies such as those in the Strategic Framework must be implemented to achieve the National Vision for girls' education.

7. Resources

Education received 29.5 percent of the total Government of Ghana budget in 2000, according to estimates by the PBME Division of the MOE. Data from 1998 indicate that 64 percent of the education budget was spent on basic education, which includes Primary and Junior Secondary Schools. Of this, 91 percent was spent on salaries. The remaining 9 percent was spent on administrative costs, service costs and investments in textbooks, construction, etc.

As a unit within the Basic Education Division, GEU activities are funded through the Basic Education Division budget. Since its role should extend beyond Basic Education to all levels, the GEU needs a budget in its own right.

Districts and regions must receive sufficient resources to take an active role in promoting girls' education at all levels. With decentralisation, District Assemblies receive a sum of money, which is budgeted for local girls' education activities according to their priorities. It is important that someone on the District Assembly represents girls' issues solely so the agenda for girls' education is promoted. These representatives can be invited to workshops on girls' issues so they link up with colleagues on other District Assemblies and the GEU.

Collaboration with other sector initiatives, such as those sponsored by the Ministry of Health, can provide more resources to address issues affecting girls. Within the education sector, the GEU's collaboration with divisions within the GES, such as TED, CRDD and the Inspectorate Division, Guidance and Counselling Unit, should help intensify efforts and ensure gender sensitivity.

The Private Sector, Development Partners and NGOs are important sources of funds. The potential of mobilising Private Sector support for girls' education needs to be explored further. Appeals can be made to industries and businesses to implement the strategies outlined in the National Vision and Strategic Framework.

Some Development Partners are already contributing significant amounts of money to support the FCUBE Programme in general and have an interest in supporting girls' education as a priority. Some currently provide support to the GEU. Additional funds may be leveraged to support girls' education programmes that contribute to the achievement of FCUBE goals for girls.

8. Conclusion

The Girls' Education Unit of the Ghana Education Service has taken two important, initial steps in articulating the National Vision for Girls' Education in Ghana and then developing a framework of strategies for achieving it. The Strategic Framework provides a variety of practical and realistic options that can be used to promote girls' education in a variety of settings, depending on local discussions of needs and decisions about how to go about change. The strategies emphasise linkages between groups to maximise resources and programme effectiveness.

Each of the key players in girls' education in Ghana—the Ministry of Education/Ghana Education Service, including the GEU, other MOE/GES divisions and Regional and District Girls' Education Teams; other Ministries; District Assemblies; the Private Sector; the Media; Religious and Traditional Leaders; Development Partners, NGOs and CBOs—has unique resources, capabilities and competencies, which provide opportunities to affect girls' access to quality education and achievement. The success of the National Vision depends on the collaboration of all these stakeholders.

A crucial element in achieving this collaboration is the leadership of the GEU as the facilitator of the change process. In its role as change facilitator, the priority activities of the GEU should be as follows:

- Mobilise all stakeholders, including the Private Sector to improve access to and quality of teaching and learning for girls.
- Target assistance to all deprived areas in the country.
- Encourage collaboration and communication among various stakeholders.

Next Steps

In light of the National Symposium on Girls' Education and the work of the Working Group, the following actions are recommended as next steps in reaching the objectives of the GEU:

- Adapt and update annual work plan to address identified priority activities.
- Develop a matrix of goals and strategies by organisations and locations.
- Develop a database of district projects compiled by DGET and the work by organisations included in the matrix mentioned above.
- Develop a database of role models and contact information.
- Explore ways to mobilise Private Sector support in support of education.
- Ask the MOE/GES to consider (a) relocating the GEU to where it can most appropriately promote equity for girls at *all* levels, and (b) creating a separate budget so that the GEU has the necessary resources to do its work.

With the combined effort of many, the barriers to girls' education would be overcome. As the Minister of State for Primary, Secondary and Girl-Child Education said in her keynote address at the National Symposium:

> *It is our collective responsibility to ensure that the multifaceted nature of the girls' education programme is holistic, co-ordinated and focused so that we successfully develop this other half of our human capital.*
>
> *—Hon. Christine Churcher*
>
> *Minister of State for Primary, Secondary and Girl-Child Education*

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